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New York

President:	Ms. Wallström	(Sweden)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mrs. Cordova Soría
	China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Djedje
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Radomski
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mrs. Haley

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Chad to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to warmly welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, Her Excellency Ms. Amina Mohammed, to whom I now give the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: Let me begin by thanking the President of the Security Council for convening today's meeting on women and peace and security in the Sahel, as well as for Sweden's leadership on this issue during the country's time in the Security Council.

Yesterday I returned from a joint United Nations-African Union mission to three countries — South Sudan, the Niger and Chad. That mission was the second of its kind, following last year's high-level visit to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. When I reported back to the Security Council at that time (see S/PV.8022) — marking the first time the Security Council heard a briefing on women and peace and security in relation to a country situation — members of the Council requested further trips of this nature, a request that I am pleased to report we took forward. I would like to thank the people and the Governments of South Sudan, Chad and the Niger.

We were joined in the Niger and Chad by Foreign Minister Wallström in her capacity as President of the Security Council for July. At various points on the trip, we were also joined by senior United Nations colleagues, including the Executive Directors of UN-Women and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and his Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa, and representatives of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and the Sustainable Energy for All initiative. We were also joined by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel and the Special Adviser on the Sahel. I was very proud to lead a delegation in which women made up the majority.

Our purpose was to highlight issues of women and peace and security and development. Throughout the trip, we met with women civil society leaders, community representatives and religious and traditional chiefs. We visited many development projects, and then met with local authorities, senior Government officials and Heads of State to discuss the key challenges and opportunities that exist and to convey the voices and messages that we had heard from women. Four issues resonated most dramatically.

The first was the need to address the stark cost that women and girls pay for conflict. That was particularly evident in South Sudan, where we visited women in protection-of-civilian sites who spoke of the violence they face both inside and outside the camps. It was also borne out in the stories of women in rural areas of Chad, where the impact of Boko Haram has resulted in insecurity, loss of family members and the increased use of female suicide bombers.

Secondly, we heard a universal and increasingly frustrated call by women for greater inclusion, representation and participation in all areas of society. They demand greater participation in decision-making. In Juba in South Sudan, in Addis Ababa and in Khartoum they asked that their voices be heard in the peace process. In Chad and the Niger they advocated for the implementation of legislation on a quota for political participation and the recognition of their role in the economy and in preventing violent extremism.

Greater representation at the community level is a further imperative. The women religious leaders we met in Chad are a very powerful voice against gender inequality and against the attacks on women's rights that are such a core part of terrorist groups' strategy and identity. By teaching the Qur'an, they are sending a message that the Qur'an and Islam are for both men and women and that Islam is a religion of peace.

Women are also seeking greater inclusion in the economy. In the Bol region of the Lake Chad basin we saw the multiple roles fisherwomen were playing

in maintaining livelihoods in the absence of men who had been killed and in building community resilience in the face of environmental degradation and insecurity caused by the Boko Haram insurgency. Such models, if scaled up, have the potential to generate economic dividends for the country. We reminded leaders that inclusion is not a woman's issue; it is, rather, a whole-of-society issue.

Thirdly, there is a clear need to keep countries experiencing fragility today from becoming failed States tomorrow. Chad and the Niger are dealing with challenges that are largely not of their making, including insecurity that originated beyond their borders and climate change, which respects no borders at all. Despite their own constraints, they are among the world's most generous hosts of refugees. But the impact on their economies and development aspirations has been profound. The President of the Niger, for example, presented to us his renaissance plan to meet the basic needs of the country's population, but it has been hampered by the fall in uranium and oil prices and the expenditures on security. Security therefore comes at a price; all too often it comes at the expense of development.

In that context, it is critical that we all step up, which means urgently increasing our budget support for development in those and other fragile countries. It is a matter, first and foremost, of human dignity. But it is also a matter of peace and security. Investment in development must be transformative: it must support scaled-up, integrated projects such as we saw in the Niger when we visited the United Nations programme that brought together health, nutrition, agriculture, water and sanitation, alongside women's empowerment, recognizing the context of climate change. I am confident that the reforms that we are pursuing in the United Nations will provide the necessary space to scale up such interventions.

With today's conflicts being greater in both number and complexity, it is more important than ever to find the path to peacebuilding and sustainable development for all. Across the three countries we visited, it is evident that women can be the agents of a new and necessary approach — a new narrative, a new paradigm.

We sensed during our visit an increasingly pressing need to operationalize the policies, frameworks and agendas that we have in place. For 18 years, the Security Council has discussed the agenda item of women and peace and security in annual thematic debates. Once a year we assert that gender equality is foundational to stability and peace. But rarely have we moved beyond the principles. We believe that now is the time to move from frameworks to action. Investing in peace now in this region will bring lasting global dividends for all.

With resolution 1325 (2000) and the seven resolutions that build on it we have the necessary commitments. We have tools such as a recalibrated United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. We must now bring these tools and commitments to life, while encouraging further alignment among the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Agenda 2063 and, most important, national plans.

The cost of inaction is high. Poverty, weak institutions and gender inequality, including the abhorrent practices such as child marriage, are creating an environment ripe for extremism. I thank members of the Council again for supporting such joint missions, which we believe contribute greatly to advancing the work of the Council. We look forward to working together to draw the appropriate lessons towards building lives of peace, security and equality for all.

The President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Diop.

Ms. Diop (*spoke in French*): Allow me to echo Ms. Amina Mohammed in congratulating you, Madam Minister, on Sweden's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I wish you every success during your term.

I would also like to seize this opportunity to thank His Excellency Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, who wholeheartedly lent his support to the joint mission of the United Nations, the African Union and Sweden that has just concluded under the leadership of Ms. Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General, with the effective participation of Ms. Wallström.

The mission is at the heart of our meeting this morning. It fits perfectly alongside the call for action of the African Women Leaders Network, which is a movement of women working in all sectors of society, including among young women and women from rural areas. It is a movement that aims to mobilize efforts to transform Africa and thereby contribute to a prosperous

and peaceful Africa. The Network is supported by the United Nations and the African Union through the Office of the Special Envoy and UN-Women, as well as the Federal Republic of Germany.

It is often said that there is no peace and security without development, and no development without peace. But it can also be said that there is no peace, security and development without the effective participation of women. If further proof of that were needed, the mission of solidarity that we have just carried out in South Sudan, Chad and the Niger highlighted once again the poignant realities of women and girls who suffer the effects of deprivation that arise from the abundance of attention that States must pay to military security to combat radicalization and violent extremism.

As members of the Council know, the Lake Chad and Sahel regions are being hit by the full force of the extremists of Boko Haram and other radicalized groups. Faced with that threat, which is so grave that it can endanger a State, such as Mali, the States of the region have mobilized to fight that evil, which strikes indiscriminately and across borders. For those States, the resources of which are already among the most meagre in the world, security efforts have no impact on investments in social structures, and consequently there is a weak response in meeting the needs of their people. In the Lake Chad region, success against Boko Haram has led to the return of many young people who now, unfortunately, find themselves unemployed, feel abandoned and, as such, fall easy prey to the return of radicalized groups.

In the Niger, we have seen the devastating effects of poverty and the lack of opportunity for families, and their impact on young people, especially young women and, may I say, on children becoming child brides, which leads not just to physical but also to mental trauma. I have long travelled through conflict zones. I have seen atrocities committed by armed groups — girls and young boys raped, for example. Nevertheless, in the region that we visited, an issue that particularly marked me was that of child marriage, with its consequences of bodies completely battered by fistulas, as well as the ostracization, stigmatization and abandonment of those children. The only clinic available in the entire region, where the majority of the people are women and the majority of those women are under 18 years old, had only one doctor to attend to the harm done to the bodies of those young girls. It is true that the practice of early marriage existed before the rise of radicalization, but the exacerbation of poverty among families displaced by conflict seems to have pushed them to give their daughters away to arranged marriages, the consequences of which include the girls giving birth far too early and them suffering from broken bodies and spirits. They are abandoned by society. Is that not a recipe for them to turn towards radicalization and violent extremism?

Alongside the troubling reality of the effects of conflicts on women and youth, our mission was also saw the resilience of women and their determination to contribute to the search for solutions. In Chad, religious women leaders, as Ms. Amina Mohammed mentioned, shared with us their innovative strategies at the community level to prevent the radicalization of young people and to meet the threats posed by armed groups, such as Boko Haram. They focus their efforts on the education of children, above all young girls, who then become active agents against violent extremism. They seek to convey an inclusive interpretation of the Koran with a view to promoting dialogue for peace. We will support Chad as it seeks to implement its national action plan under resolution 1325 (2000), including on issues related to the prevention of and fight against violent extremism through the gender perspective.

In the Niger, women used the national action plan under resolution 1325 (2000) as a tool for their voices to be heard in decision-making processes on peace, security and development in the country. Women are undeniably victims of violence, whether directly linked to conflicts or as victims of practices that are exacerbated by conflicts. Women are also agents of change in spearheading initiatives to respond to the challenges facing them. The efforts of those women in their communities show that the response to the security challenges faced by the regions that we have just visited require investment in the development of individuals so as to prevent radicalization and violent extremism, which has become the scourge of the Sahel. That underpins the importance of investing in education, as well as the need to build the capacities of women and youth by providing them with employment opportunities. They called for a more sustained presence of the State and the international community to meet the basic needs of health care, water and food, the lack of which is often harnessed by extremist groups to attract to their cause certain marginalized

factions of the population. It is indeed better to prevent than to cure.

I welcome the leadership of Senegal in steering the first Security Council debate on water, peace and security, which took place in November 2016 (see S/PV.7818). Our joint mission of the African Union, the United Nations and Sweden once again underscored the key role that water plays in our society.

Allow me to take this opportunity to commend, from this rostrum, the efforts undertaken by Chad and the Niger in the fight against violent extremism, which, as I mentioned earlier, leads to exclusion and poverty in the affected regions and only further entrenches the cycle of violence. It is important that those efforts be supported by the international community in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, above all to ensure that security does not come at the expense of the peoples' needs.

There are already initiatives, such as the coordination platform of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, which brings together the majority of stakeholders for the benefit of the countries and communities in the Sahel to mobilize resources and define regional priorities. The African Union also established a strategy for the Sahel region, which was adopted by the Peace and Security Council. We have also recently set up another programme, together with the Economic Community of West African States and the Lake Chad Basin, which is aimed at strengthening the capacities of the Multinational Joint Task Force. However, resources remain limited and continue to be directed more to military actions than to meeting the needs of the people.

Before concluding this statement, I would like to share some recommendations that I believe are important and that have emerged from our visit to the Sahel region.

First, the fight for security in the countries concerned can be won by meeting the needs of the people, especially women and young people, who are victims but who have also demonstrated their determination to address the challenges they face. But they cannot do it alone. I therefore appeal to the international community to step up its aid.

Secondly, prevention is needed, including through sizeable investments in education, the management of natural resources such as water, job creation and the protection of women and young girls and promotion of their role and leadership in the search for peace.

Women should the first partners of choice. Each woman must be empowered to be able to say "no" to conflict, "no" to early marriage and "no" to extremism. Women must be able to read the Qur'an and convey the message of peace contained therein to their children. I welcome the fact that the political leaders that we met during our mission reassured us of their determination to make women and young people the drivers of political and economic change in their countries. Indeed, peace and security efforts will be successful only when we take robust action to defend the nexus of peace, security and development and to integrate the gender perspective in our instruments for conflict prevention and resolution. That is what women and the African people are expecting from the Council.

The President: I thank Ms. Diop for her briefing.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

Yesterday morning, the Deputy Secretary-General; the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security; and I arrived in New York from Niger. It was my privilege to join Amina and Bineta on that joint high-level mission focused on women, peace and security in the Sahel. It is also now my pleasure to welcome my travel companions to today's meeting. As they have done already, I would like to thank the Governments of the Niger and Chad for their generous hospitality, and the inspiring women and men we met during our mission for sharing their stories with us.

I would like to make three points following our mission: first, on the overall challenges in the region, secondly, how we must address the interrelated nature of these challenges, and thirdly, that all this is not a women's issue — it is a peace and security issue.

The countries we visited and the Sahel region are located between hope and despair. There is hope, because the Sahel is blessed with abundant human, cultural and natural resources — for example, solar energy, which offers tremendous capital for rapid growth. It is also the most youthful region of the world, with 64.5 per cent of the population aged less than 25 years.

Hope was inspired also by the women and girls we met, who had moved from being victims to survivors to agents of change; by youth, who look to their futures with confidence despite their difficult circumstances; and by

the vibrant and determined civil society organizations working to improve the lives of men, women, girls and boys across the region. We also heard from the Governments of Chad and the Niger about their efforts, undertaken together with other countries in the region, to promote regional stability and combat terrorism, including through the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force.

However, there is also despair because of chronic underdevelopment, terrorism and violent extremism, a lack of respect for human rights and the negative effects of climate change. There are 24 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, and the growing insecurity has worsened vulnerabilities. Today, the national budgets are used to finance security concerns, as we already heard, with less money available for education and health. Those challenges affect women and men, boys and girls differently. Women often bear a disproportionate burden.

In the Lake Chad region, where people are already facing a food and nutrition crisis, we heard how the shrinking of the Lake and growing insecurity have had severe consequences for people who traditionally have sustained themselves by fishing activities. However, now, women are learning to fish. They said that before the fish were this big and men did the fishing; now the fish are this small and we can fish. The fisherwomen we met in Bol told us that they wished for only three things: bigger boats, better nets and to not get raped. That simple request illustrates the conditions under which they live, marked by poverty and sexual and gender-based violence.

In both Chad and the Niger, we met with civil society representatives who described challenges such as a lack of female candidates for public offices, inadequate health care and difficulties in ensuring education for girls. In the Niger, we heard that three out of four girls will be married before turning 18, with devastating consequences, as Ms. Diop has already said. We met with women religious leaders and discussed efforts to prevent radicalization and to end the practice of child marriages. We were encouraged to see that in both countries, women were coming together in networks to address the challenges they face, including sexual and reproductive health and rights and access to basic social services.

Secondly, this joint mission encompassed all aspects of the United Nations work — peace and security, human rights, humanitarian assistance and development. It was once again clear to me, during our mission, how those areas of work overlap. The many challenges in the Sahel cannot be dealt with separately, but rather require joint political strategies and integrated responses.

The United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and its support plan are key tools at our disposal to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063. Gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the Strategy's five key priorities. We must spare no effort in ensuring implementation. We need to expand the choices and opportunities available to women from an early age. That means ensuring education for girls, addressing restrictive traditional and related social norms, and fighting poverty. It means going back to basics, starting where we can make a difference.

Yet, the resources needed to fully address the challenges in the region are woefully inadequate. We need to step up our efforts to mobilize support and strengthen national capacities to respond to inequalities, fight impunity, create sustainable livelihoods and empower and educate women and girls. Aid must be gender-sensitive and take into account the various situations in which women and men find themselves, as well as promoting equality.

Thirdly, our visit also underscored that all of this taken together is not solely a women's issue — it is a peace and security issue. In the Lac region of Chad we were deeply moved by Halima, who had been married off as a 15-year-old child and then trained by Boko Haram to be a suicide bomber. She lost both her legs when the suicide vests of some of the girls who had been trained with her exploded as they entered a busy market. Today Halima is a paralegal and is actively engaged in the prevention of violent extremism, as well as being a powerful symbol of the many roles of women in peace and security.

The increased use of female suicide bombers — two thirds of suicide attacks in 2017 were carried out by women or girls — illustrates the cruel way in which terrorists seek to exploit the perceived goodness of women to maximize harm, to the victims of suicide bombings and to communities and families. That is disastrous given women's role as pillars of families, societies and communities. Societies could collapse, but nonetheless women continue to fight. We must empower

and educate girls and women and end child marriage. To fight terrorism, there is no doubt, we need adopt a gender-sensitive and human rights-based approach, whether it pertains to the prevention of radicalization, counter-terrorism operations or providing support to victims.

Let me end by answering the question of why this is a matter for those around this table, a matter for the Security Council. It is because women's destiny is also our destiny. Therefore, what can and must we do? In two years resolution 1325 (2000) will be 20 years old. I would like to put the following challenge to the United Nations system and all Member States: by 2020 ensure that United Nations peacekeeping and political missions fully deliver on the women and peace and security agenda. The Security Council has a critical role to play, including by ensuring that women's voices are heard around peace negotiation tables and in the Chamber; mission mandates include a women and peace and security perspective; gender posts in missions continue to be funded; women and peace and security tasks are adequately resourced and prioritized; and that gender is systematically included in mission reporting and monitoring.

We must all set the same challenge for ourselves. Members can count on Sweden to do its part to support that effort. To start, we will continue to ensure that civil society perspectives are heard in the Chamber. For the annual debate on resolution 1325 (2000), we commit to hosting a civil society forum. We also commit to supporting the Secretariat to build capacity for enhanced gender-responsive reporting. Only then will we gain a full understanding of the challenges and of the most effective responses.

Let us continue to intensify our efforts to support the countries of the Sahel on the issues we have discussed today. I commend the African Union and the United Nations for joining forces and deepening their partnership on the issue of women and peace and security. Missions such as the one undertaken last week should become annual events, and every Security Council meeting should consider the women and peace and security perspective as an essential part of our work to end conflicts. I have no doubt that if we were to do so, our motto of "more women, more peace" would become a reality.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to the other members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We area gratefu for the convening of today's meeting. We also thank Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Ms. Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, for their important briefings. Similarly, we welcome you, Madam Minister, and thank you for your valuable testimony and proposals on the important joint mission, which underscores the commitment of your country, Sweden, to the women and peace and security agenda.

Peru remains deeply concerned about the critical situation in the Sahel region, where women and girls in particular are affected by food insecurity, poverty, armed conflict, violent extremism, gender discrimination and sexual violence. It is estimated that one in 10 women between the ages of 15 and 49 has been the victim of sexual violence in Mali. Women and children in the Niger account for the majority of refugees and internally displaced persons. Throughout the subregion there is an increase in the number of women and girls recruited by terrorists and violent extremist groups. That situation requires a comprehensive and coordinated strategy that addresses its root causes, promoting, among other things, women's empowerment, gender equality and access to justice.

Peru is convinced that the participation of women in political life and decision-making is crucial for conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. We must promote greater participation by women in the processes and mechanisms for implementing peace and reconciliation agreements. At the same time, their empowerment must be promoted through education and the creation of employment opportunities, as well as when it comes to access to justice and the fight against impunity for the crimes of which they are victims. Victims must have confidence in their national institutions and those responsible for violence must be held accountable. Women and girls who are victims of sexual violence are often stigmatized and ostracized in their communities. They must be able to count on programmes to promote their rehabilitation and reintegration.

It is essential that the Council remain united with regard to the gradual development and implementation of the women and peace and security agenda. That is because the evidence shows that the protection of

women and girls during conflict, and, ultimately, their empowerment, has a direct impact on sustaining peace. In that regard, we underscore the importance of promoting work among the various women's organizations and the informal group of experts on women and peace and security, which Peru has the honour to co-chair with Sweden.

We also believe that it is necessary for the Security Council to collaborate with and promote the work of the regional mechanisms involved in the quest for solutions to the crisis in the Sahel, such as the African Union, the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) and the Economic Community of West African States. We believe that is important to take into account the gender perspective when implementing the activities of the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel. Similarly, with regard to the reform of peacekeeping operations, Blue Helmets must receive adequate training on protecting the human rights of women and girls.

We welcome the priority that the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel accords to such issues, with the support of the African Union, with a view to strengthening governance, security and development in the region. We emphasize the importance of providing it with adequate resources.

In conclusion, we wish to stress that the joint visits by the United Nations and the African Union are important tools for coordinating efforts in the quest for peace and stability in the region. We welcome the recent visit by Ms. Amina Mohammed and Ms. Bineta Diop and encourage more such visits in future.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I thank Her Excellency Ms. Margot Wallström, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, for convening today's meeting. It is a pleasure to have you with us again, Madam President.

I would also like to warmly thank Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and the African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Bineta Diop, for their insightful briefings on their joint mission to the countries of the Sahel. I join others in commending all three women for their inspirational leadership.

We are heartened by increasing cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union (AU) in supporting Africa's steady pursuit of peace, stability and sustainable development. We encourage further strengthening of that cooperation, while underscoring the important role of women in reaching those objectives. The recent high-level joint visit was another significant step to promote the women and peace and security agenda and advance gender empowerment. Such collaborative efforts must continue so as to achieve the goals of the Joint United Nations-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and reach the targets of 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

Turning to the implementation of the women and peace and security commitments in the Sahel, we commend the joint efforts of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel and of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to support the participation of women in conflict prevention, including through the ECOWAS 2017-2020 action plan for women, peace and security. We also see the benefits of their convening, last April, a high-level conference on women, violence and terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel, which resulted in a call to action to increase women's participation in preventing violent extremism. Our delegation praises the African Union for progressively gender mainstreaming within the African Peace and Security Architecture and greatly appreciates the efforts of the African Women Leaders Network, which was launched last year by the AU Commission, UN-Women and Germany to enhance the leadership of women in the transformation of Africa. We also acknowledge the important role of women's organizations in improving women's access to leadership and participation in peace processes and encourage Member States to strengthen their engagement with women's and youth groups.

It nevertheless remains imperative that a conscious effort be made to bridge the gap between spoken commitments and actual actions. We need to ensure a protective environment that will enhance women's protection and security, and provide access to justice and services for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence. We also emphasize the importance of a gender perspective across all components of operations of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, as set out in resolution 2391 (2017). Much remains to be done in fulfilling United Nations recommendations regarding the inclusion of women in peace talks to resolve the Sahel crisis, while ensuring a 30 per cent quota for women in decision-making and politics in the region and allocating 15 per cent of national budgets

for development and peacebuilding to promote gender equality in the Sahel.

There is also an urgent need to focus on the structural drivers of instability and the root causes of the conflict that disproportionately affect women by reducing poverty, strengthening local governance, providing basic services, creating better opportunities for education and employment and mitigating the impact of climate change. The close link between security and development is very important not only in one specific country, but also in the region and the world as a whole. We therefore welcome the recent launch of the revitalized strategic plan for the Sahel on the sidelines of the AU Summit in Nouakchott, which targets six key areas, including the empowerment of women. We strongly support other subregional and comprehensive approaches aimed at building resilience and increasing peace and development in the region, such as the Alliance for the Sahel initiative.

We welcomed United Nations reform on repositioning the development system to foster greater cooperation among various United States agencies on the ground. Today we must go further and ensure greater cooperation at the regional level to advance the development agenda in a comprehensive and effective manner. However, financing the women and peace and security agenda remains a concern. We must therefore provide the funds needed to ensure that peacekeeping and political missions are provided with sufficient gender expertise, authority and capacity. That funding gap can partially be overcome by more substantive reforms, streamlined and better-coordinated strategies within the United Nations system and improved cooperation with other partners in the region and globally. Enhanced data-collection and reporting are also very important for the success of the women and peace and security agenda. What is required is an increased availability of timely and accurate national gender-disaggregated data and reports on progress towards implementing and monitoring those commitments.

In conclusion, I reiterate that Kazakhstan will always stand for the full contribution of women in all phases of mediation, conflict resolution, post-conflict recovery and long-term development through the joint efforts of the United Nations and the African Union.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): In honour of the Swedish presidency of the Security Council, let me try to say "thank you very much" in Swedish: *tack så mycket*. We are very grateful to you, Madam President, for organizing this debate. It is important to continue to ask that attention be paid to the meaningful participation of women in matters concerning peace and security, as we did on 8 March concerning Afghanistan (see S/PV.8199, and in almost every thematic meeting of the Security Council, including our discussion on the Sahel today.

In our view, advocating for the meaningful participation of women is the right thing to do, as it has concrete, positive effects on peace and security. We sincerely thank you, Mada President, the Deputy Secretary-General and the Special Envoy of the African Union for briefing the Security Council on the joint visit. It shows how useful joint African Union (AU)-United Nations high-level missions are as a means to deepen the AU-United Nations partnership. In particular, we were impressed with their meeting with victims of sexual violence and those who may easily fall prey to the latter. You touched us, Madam President, when you spoke of the women in Bol who wished only not to be raped.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is deeply appalled by those horrific acts of sexual violence, and the perpetrators must be brought to justice. This debate allows us to shed light on the critical role of women in issues of peace and security in the broader Sahel region. In that context, I will focus on three issues: first, the security implications of climate change on women; secondly, the challenges posed by the widespread conflict between farmers and herders; and, thirdly, the importance of women's participation in decision-making.

Concerning my first point, the security implications of climate change, the latter disproportionately affects women in the Sahel, especially owing to its effects on stability and security, which was underscored by the concrete examples that you gave in your briefing, Madam President. Climate change increases the number of livelihoods lost as a result of conflict. It decreases women's access to essential resources, such as water, thereby reinforcing the negative consequences of conflict for women. As elsewhere, those most vulnerable in the Sahel become even more vulnerable, and too often that means that women and girls are the most affected. In that light, our responses to peace and security challenges in the Sahel must be both climate and gender sensitive. In that context, we reiterate the need for adequate risk assessments and risk-management

strategies. The Council already emphasized that point in resolution 2349 (2017) and has repeatedly recalled it since then.

That leads me to my second point. Climate change intensifies conflicts between farmers and herders in the Lake Chad region and the wider Sahel region. Such conflicts have devastating effects for women and girls. Widows are evicted from their farmland. Women and girls become even more vulnerable to economic predation and sexual violence and exploitation. Conflicts between farmers and herders are reportedly now killing more women and girls than the Boko Haram crisis, and Boko Haram by itself was the cause of a staggering 1,000 cases of conflict-related sexual violence last year in Nigeria alone. Conflicts between farmers and herders are becoming multidimensional threats affecting the entire subregion. We join the Secretary-General in calling on the Economic Community of West African States and its States members to develop regional, long-term and integrated strategies in response. We feel that the United Nations system should support that, and it is important to develop those strategies in consultation with affected communities, in particular with women's participation.

Lastly, concerning participation, you, Madam President, and others rightly spoke of the vital role of women's participation in decision-making.

We had an open debate on peacekeeping on 28 March (see S/PV.8218), at which we heard a briefing by Fatimata Touré of Mali. She spoke of the severe underrepresentation of women in the mechanisms set up for the implementation and monitoring of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, in which currently only 3 per cent of the people involved are women. That number is way too low. In resolution 2423 (2018), the Security Council rightly urged the Malian parties to ensure women's equal and meaningful participation.

The Deputy Secretary-General visited Nigeria last year. She was able to obtain an agreement that the food distribution in refugee camps would be in the hands of women. We felt that to be an excellent example of women's empowerment, an approach that we believe deserves to be followed up elsewhere, both in the Sahel and beyond.

In conclusion, women's empowerment and gender equality are closely connected to peace and stability in society. There is overwhelming evidence to that effect. The meaningful participation of women has the potential to transform societies and build peace. Let us all work towards that goal. The women and girls of the Sahel and elsewhere need our support and the commitment of the Council.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank you very much indeed, Madam President, for being with us again today. It is fantastic to have you here. I thank you for all the work Sweden has done on this important dossier, and particularly for keeping it at the forefront of our minds in the Security Council and for the way you have tried to ensure that these issues are properly integrated and that the Security Council and the United Nations more generally get out of the silos that we are all familiar with. I am obviously also hugely grateful to Ms. Diop and the Deputy Secretary-General for leading the mission, which in my view was an incredibly important event. Like other speakers, I think it would be an excellent thing if it were to be regular. As my Dutch colleague said, there are many areas of the world that would benefit from their insights and engagement. They cannot be everywhere, but I think they have made an very good start on this occasion.

I was particularly interested in the assessment of the level of women's participation in decision-making and in peace and development processes, and I was struck by the same comment about preferring not to be raped as my Dutch colleague. But I think even more important than that was the interest shown in producing more female candidates by the people whom the Deputy Secretary-General and Ms. Diop talked to. I think that if we had only one thing we could concentrate on in order to build that pipeline for the future and start changing behaviours through Governments, it would definitely be worth thinking further about.

I would like to say that we in the United Kingdom fully share your goal, Madam, of having full delivery of resolution 1325 (2000) by 2020. You can count on Britain to work with you here and at the United Nations Office in Geneva to realize that.

As other speakers have hinted, the question of women's economic empowerment, their enjoyment of human rights and their role within their families and communities is something that should be nurtured and curated. This is not just a moral issue but also an economic and a prosperity issue. The countries that make proper use of and develop all the talents of their people will thrive. I think the Kazakh Ambassador

set it out very well when he talked about the link between security and development. So we do everyone a favour by intensifying the link between women's participation in economic life and the foundation of peace and security. From our perspective, we would like to see even more effort dedicated to integrating a gender perspective in strategies, including those about countering violent extremism, and we would like to see more women's involvement in policy planning, right on the ground floor. I think that was one of the conclusions of the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security in June.

We heard a lot yesterday in the open debate on children in armed conflict (see S/PV.8305) about the disproportionate stigmatizing of women returnees when they go back to their communities, and I think that is worth putting on the table again today. It would be very good to hear from the countries concerned about what can be done to address that particular issue.

Turning specifically to the Sahel, the United Kingdom is increasing its regional presence there. We opened a mission in Chad in March. As I understand it, Chad and the Niger, sadly, sit at the bottom of the gender-equality index and that is why we in the United Kingdom want to do more to help those colleagues develop women's empowerment. I think the efforts that the Security Council, the United Nations system, the African Union and the Group of Five for the Sahel themselves have undertaken so far to ensure that we can fine-tune adequate measures to empower women are a very good step forward. From our perspective, we concentrate a lot on providing reproductive-health services to displaced populations and refugees, and we are prioritizing access to voluntary family planning for future support. We spend a lot of our programme funds on climate and environment resilience in eastern Chad, and the Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters programme commits to 50 per cent women beneficiaries and includes a component on gender-based violence. All those things are contributing, I hope, to what we are talking about today.

We also have a partnership with France, arising out of the Anglo-French summit in January, for working on gender within the Sahel Alliance, supporting greater mainstreaming on gender across the work of the Alliance. If there are other colleagues in the United Nations who would like to know more about that, or even contribute with us, we would be very happy to work with them on that.

You, Madam President, particularly mentioned education and girls' education, and that is also a subject that we spoke about yesterday under the heading of children in armed conflict. I would just like to highlight the fact that in the Sahel, millions of children and young people are out of school, thanks to the presence of terrorist groups and militias, the conflict between farmers and herders and the difficult economic situation that many families are experiencing. Of course, girls are particularly affected, sometimes because of very basic issues, such as a lack of hygiene facilities in schools to accommodate girls' particular needs. The Sahel region, as we heard, has one of the highest rates of child, early and forced marriage in the world. The barriers to girls enjoying a proper education are very severe, and the United Kingdom has therefore been concentrating on what we call the Girls Education Challenge, and is already working to support 1.5 million girls in achieving a quality education. We are also one of the largest donors to Education Cannot Wait, of which Chad is one of the four initial investment countries.

I just wanted to give a snapshot of some of the things we have been doing, and also to say how much we share your view, Madam President, that this is an absolutely critical part of being able to embed peace, security and stability in an important region.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, we would like to welcome you, Madam, in presiding over this briefing of the Security Council, and to thank you for organizing it. We listened with interest to the briefers, Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Ms. Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, on their recent visit to South Sudan, Chad and the Niger, with a focus on women's participation in peace, security and sustainable development processes.

More than 17 years after the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), the role of women in preventing and resolving armed conflicts and in post-conflict reconstruction has been expanded. However, the state of affairs with regard to the protection of women during armed conflicts is unfortunately very different, including in this part of Africa, where the level of threats to security and stability is unprecedentedly high. We have already expressed our concern about the fact that the terrorist groups that are entrenched in the

Sahel are intensifying their criminal activity and trying to expand its geographic reach. Women continue to be the victims of violence, and the atrocities and excesses inflicted on them by terrorist groups are horrifying. In that regard, our hopes rest on the initiative of the countries of the Group of Five for the Sahel to create a Joint Force to fight terrorism and organized crime. It will be crucial to continue to coordinate the efforts to combat extremism in the Sahel-Saharan region. We believe that it is essential to work to effectively counter the spread of extremist ideology, find practical solutions to the social and economic problems of the countries of the region and strengthen their State institutions. The United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel has a key role to play in resolving these issues.

We firmly believe in the positive role of women's participation in various aspects of the resolution of armed conflicts and post-conflict restoration. In our view, women's direct involvement in the prevention of armed conflict and in post-conflict reconstruction is an important prerequisite for ending violence against them. The Security Council's annual debates on women and peace and security enable us to monitor the overall progress in improving the protection of women in situations of armed conflict and ensuring their full and effective participation in efforts to prevent and resolve such situations. However, when we are dealing with concrete situations, it is important to take their specifics into account.

We believe that it is national Governments that should play the primary role in protecting women at every stage of an armed conflict, while the measures taken by United Nations bodies and civil society should be aimed at supporting and supplementing the efforts of States. In particular, the Security Council can make the most effective use of its toolkit and resources in matters directly related to the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security. With regard to such important topics as ensuring gender equality and expanding women's rights and potential, the specialized United Nations entities and mechanisms continue their successful and systematic work, which Russia is ready to continue to assist in every way.

Mrs. Haley (United States of America): I would like to thank you, Madam President, and our briefers.

Throughout my years of public service, I have encouraged women to use the power of their voice. I have been inspired by my mother, who went to law school and was offered a judgeship in India but was unable to take the bench, owing to the challenges that women faced in these areas at the time. I am inspired by my daughter, who is inheriting a world in which the opportunities for women to use the power of their voices to advance justice, prosperity, peace and security have never been greater. Here at the United Nations, we have combined that passion for amplifying women's voices with the belief that human rights issues, including those related to the rights of women and girls, are a critical element in peace and security. When women's voices are silenced, whether through violence or a lack of political rights or education, entire communities suffer, and that suffering leads to conflict.

In the Sahel region, the Security Council has said many times that the only solution to widespread conflict is a comprehensive approach. And that means empowering women in both politics and the economy. The International Peace Institute has found that when women are involved in brokering and implementing peace agreements, the agreements are more likely to last. When women are involved in peacemaking, they enlarge the scope of agreements to include social priorities such as children and families. The United States supports increasing women's participation in peacekeeping activities. But understanding the connections between women's fundamental rights and international peace and security means understanding that empowering women reduces the need for peacekeepers in the first place. When women participate in all social, political and economic activities, local and national economies flourish. When the rights of women and children are protected, life gets better. Health, well-being and educational levels improve, and all of those things come together to protect and reinforce peace and security.

The United States is strongly committed to empowering women in developing communities from the ground up. We work to ensure that our assistance goes directly to the kinds of women I meet on my trips abroad — the mothers struggling to feed their families, educate their kids and create a future for their families and their communities, the women pushing through barriers in the quest for equal political representation, and the entrepreneurs, pioneers, goal-setters and other extraordinary women changing the face of society.

Across Africa, the United States is helping to build the capacity of the African Union and other regional organizations to support women's political participation. We are honoured to be working with

Special Envoy Diop on the Continental Results Framework for Monitoring and Reporting on the Implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa. In the Sahel, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is working to build stronger connections between the programmes it funds for food security, health, micro-enterprise and community development. Ivanka Trump is working to give more women in emerging markets access to financing and capital. As she reminds us, women are the world's safest borrowers, paying back microloans at 97 per cent. In addition, women business owners create a multiplier effect in communities. They are more likely to hire other women and reinvest in their families and communities. In the Niger, USAID is engaging women in community dialogues and local decision-making in order to prevent violent extremism in vulnerable communities. Traumatized, uneducated young boys are prime targets for radicalization, and nobody understands that better than their mothers. The thread that runs through all of these efforts is that when we bring together women with power and resources, we create deeper, more sustainable prosperity. And that stability and prosperity protect human rights and promote security.

I recently spent some time with a woman who understands better than most the consequences of a failure to protect the rights of women. Regional United Nations Women Ambassador for Africa Jaha Dukureh is an inspiration, because she speaks from personal experience. When she was a week old, she became a victim of female genital mutilation. When she was 15, she was forced into child marriage. But she managed to escape all of that. She beat almost impossible odds, got an education and became an advocate for the world's most vulnerable girls and women. Ambassador Dukureh has found the power of her voice. She should inspire all of us to follow her example and do more than pay lip service to women's rights, by seeking out girls and women and listening to their voices. Protecting their rights actually creates opportunities that benefit the cause of international peace and security.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Equatorial Guinea would first like to express its condemnation of the recent deplorable terrorist attacks on civil society and the defence and security forces of the Sahel and on the international forces in Mali, including the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and Operation Barkhane. Our prayers go out to the victims of these attacks and to their families and communities, to whom we offer our deepest condolences. We also wish a swift recovery for all those who were injured.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea congratulates the Swedish presidency for its leadership and its choice of topics for debate this month. Yesterday, under the presidency of His Excellency the Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Stefan Löfven, we held an open debate on the very important issue of children and armed conflict, which led to the unanimous adoption of resolution 2427 (2018) by the Security Council. Today, under the presidency of Her Excellency the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Margot Wallström, we are participating in a meeting on an equally important topic, women and peace and security in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin region. We are very grateful for the briefings we have heard from the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, and from the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Bineta Diop, who provided us with a very comprehensive and enlightening overview of this issue.

The Boko Haram insurgency continues to be active in its ninth year and is currently affecting the entire Diffa region, in the Niger, and the Lake Chad region. The people of these regions continue to suffer the devastating impact of terrorist attacks, which have driven millions from their homes and left them dependent on humanitarian aid. More than 2 million people in the region remain displaced today. Some live in overcrowded facilities, without access to basic services such as shelter, water and food, and others have settled in hosting communities, in extreme precarity.

The effect of this crisis is being particularly felt by women and girls. Women and girls are used as suicide bombers; they are subject to forced marriage; and, if they are released or have escaped from the clutches of Boko Haram terrorists, they face stigmatization. A study carried out by the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point in 2017, together with Yale University, in the United States, found that of the 434 suicide attacks carried by Boko Haram between 2011 and 2017, 56 per cent were carried out by young women and girls, including two thirds of the suicide attacks in 2017 alone.

Given this worrisome situation, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea continues to condemn terrorism in the strongest possible terms and calls on the international community to support the Governments

of the region in making the necessary investments and strengthening the mechanisms required in order to promote reconciliation, guarantee accountability and intensify the combat against terrorism. Also required will be initiatives aimed at preventing violent extremism that include the human rights and gender dimensions.

Concerning the Sahel region, where terrorist attacks are also having a very harmful impact on women and girls, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea would like to congratulate the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, which organized a high-level conference on women, violence and terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel, in partnership with the Economic Community of West African States, the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), the Mano River Union, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, UN-Women and the Working Group on Women, Youth, Peace and Security in West Africa and the Sahel.

We trust that the outcomes of that high-level conference will contribute to boosting the level of participation of women in all social, political and economic initiatives aimed at fighting and preventing violent extremism and fighting terrorism. With respect to the efforts made to address the situation, Equatorial Guinea also hails the recent recruitment of a gender adviser to the G-5 Sahel joint force.

We also welcome the joint efforts made by the African Union and the United Nations, as exemplified by the recent high-level visit to South Sudan, the Niger and Chad, in which the briefers we have heard from today participated, accompanied by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women; Ms. Bience Philomena Gawanas, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Africa; and Ms. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund. We would call for more visits of this kind owing to their importance and impact they could have on the ground.

We also welcome the recent efforts made by the United Nations and the European Union to better implement the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, including the recent drafting of a support plan for the Strategy, intended to promote investments in the region. We very much hope that these efforts will contribute not just to empowering women and young people, but will also have a positive impact on cross-border cooperation, conflict prevention, sustainable peace, inclusive economic growth, climate action and renewable energy.

We congratulate the Deputy Secretary-General and urge her to continue in the same enthusiastic vein in which she has been leading the efforts made in the context of the United Nations Strategy.

Finally, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea would like to underscore the positive work being done by the African Union and the Lake Chad Basin Commission in support of counterterrorism operations and of stability in the region. We reiterate our resolute support to the Governments affected as they tackle the insurgency, congratulate them on the progress they have made and encourage them to continue and intensify these efforts until stability has been achieved in the region.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Madam President, China welcomes the fact that you have travelled to New York to preside over our meeting. China thanks Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Ms. Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, for their briefings.

China welcomes the joint visit by the United Nations, the African Union and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ms. Margot Wallström, to the two countries in the Sahel region, namely, Chad and the Niger. The Sahel region faces multiple challenges in the political, security, development and other fields. The continued spread of terrorism, the growing severity of cross-border organized crime, poverty and underdevelopment, as well as the grave humanitarian situation, have had a negative impact on the peace and security of the region.

Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed has taken charge of activities related to the Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and has led a mission to the relevant countries of the region. This has demonstrated the United Nations emphasis on and commitment to peace and development in the region.

I would like to make the following points on peace and security in the Sahel region.

First, it is important to resolve hotspot regional issues through political means. The international community should, on the basis of respecting the sovereignty of the countries concerned, actively support the peace and reconciliation process of the countries of the region so as to alleviate and ultimately settle hotspot issues. China supports the relevant parties in Mali in accelerating the implementation of the Mali Peace and Reconciliation

Agreement and in the smooth holding of general elections. We should help the countries concerned with their domestic reconciliation on an as-needed basis and help the women of the region expand their participation in political processes and peacebuilding. The relevant political solutions should draw upon the opinions of women and the general public, while taking into account their interests and concerns. At the same time, attention should be given to the spillover effect of such external issues as the Libya crisis and to preventing outside factors from affecting the region.

Secondly, regional counter-terrorism cooperation should be strengthened. Terrorist attacks on civilians, armed forces and United Nations peacekeeping operations have occurred frequently in the Sahel region, resulting in significant casualties. The international community should support countries of the region in independently dealing with the threat of terrorism and help them strengthen security capacity-building and counter-terror cooperation. The United Nations and the international community, on the basis of respecting the sovereignty and will of the countries concerned, should provide targeted technology, training, equipment, logistics and financial support to countries of the region.

Thirdly, the relevant agencies of the United Nations system should actively implement the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and generate synergies. The Strategy has been in place for five years. The United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, together with its Special Representative, Mr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, has done a great deal of work to implement the Strategy. China welcomes the launch of the United Nations Support Plan for implementing the strategy and hopes that the United Nations will be able to better coordinate with the countries of the Sahel region concerned whenimplementing plans and provide targeted assistance to these countries.

Fourthly, it is important to cooperate with regional and subregional mechanisms. China appreciates the positive role of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and relevant African countries and organizations in settling Sahel issues. The international community should strengthen communication and coordination with relevant regional countries and mechanisms so that country-specific and regional strategies and the Integrated Strategy of the Sahel can be organically aligned.

The G-5 Sahel Joint Force is an important initiative undertaken by the countries of the region in responding to security challenges. Resolutions 2359 (2017) and 2391 (2017), adopted unanimously by the Council, welcomed the deployment of the G-5 Sahel Joint Force and mandated that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to provide support to the Joint Force. The international community should fully respect the leadership of Africa and allow it to independently solve African issues. We should support regional countries and organizations in their efforts to safeguard the peace and security of the Sahel region, and in particular provide substantive assistance to the G-5 Sahel Joint Force so as to meet its funding needs.

Fifthly, assistance should be provided to regional countries in their implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and positive conditions should be created to achieve peace and stability in the region. There will be no sustainable peace without sustainable development. Regional countries should therefore be given sufficient capacity to reduce poverty for their people, increase employment, better protect women and children, combat human trafficking and other cross-border organized crimes, boost the level of economic and social development and address the root causes of conflict.

China supports the efforts of African countries and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining peace and security in Africa. We have been supporting counter-terrorism projects through the China-United Nations Peace and Development Fund and have been helping African countries build their capacity to maintain peace. China is also an important troop-contributor to MINUSMA. China is willing to continue working with Council members and the international community and contribute to achieving peace and stability and common development in the Sahel region.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia) I would like to start by joining others in commending Sweden for organizing today's briefing. We also appreciate Sweden's leadership on the women and peace and security agenda in its capacity as Chair of the Council's informal expert group, and we are very pleased to see you, Madam Minister, presiding over this important meeting. I want to thank Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Bineta Diop, for their briefings on the

joint African Union-United Nations high-level mission to South Sudan, Chad and the Niger.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000,) on women and peace and security, positive developments have been noted over the years in advancing this very major and meaningful agenda, particularly in ensuring the participation and representation of women in political processes. That is particularly true in the context of Africa, where a number of countries on the continent have taken concrete steps to develop their own national action plans. In spite of all that, however, women and girls continue to bear the brunt of the devastating and dehumanizing impact of conflicts in Africa and the situation in the Sahel region, particularly in the three countries recently visited by the high-level mission, which share more or less similar experiences.

Women continue to be victims of sexual violence and other forms of abuse and are underrepresented in peace processes. As indicated in the concept note for today's briefing, the peace and security situation in the Sahel region continues to be exacerbated by climate change, induced conflicts and displacements. It is in that context that we commend the very welcome leadership by the Deputy Secretary-General in efforts aimed at finding a comprehensive solution to these issues.

As a follow-up to the recent joint high-level mission to the three countries, addressing the root causes of conflict in the Sahel region should continue to be of the utmost importance in addressing the challenges of protecting women. As such, fighting terrorism and violent extremism and comprehensively addressing the impacts of climate change in coordination with relevant actors are both critical. Such focus would enable us to chart a path to a strengthened framework for protecting women in conflict situations and to the enhanced and effective participation of women in conflict prevention, mediation and post-conflict reconstruction at all levels. In that regard, we welcome the new United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel announced in Nouakchott, which we hope will contribute to the realization of this objective. The momentum generated by the Nouakchott process, the creation and authorization of the deployment of the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force and the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel should certainly be sustained to achieve tangible progress, including in improving the lives of the most vulnerable sectors of society, particularly women and children.

Cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations, as demonstrated by the joint mission, would enable us to integrate a regional approach to the broader discussion on women and peace and security, which also provides a very good basis for cooperation between the two organizations in facilitating greater implementation and enhanced progress on the agenda in Africa. Such collaboration could focus, inter alia, on ensuring the active participation of women and women's groups in peace processes, conflict prevention, resolution and peacebuilding activities, as well as in the promotion and protection of the human rights of women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The possibility of undertaking similar joint missions to other parts of Africa affected by conflict and which are on the Council's agenda could be further explored. Mechanisms to utilize the good offices of the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the Women, Peace and Security could also be explored with the aim of advancing the agenda at the African level.

The African Union Peace and Security Council recently decided to adopt a Continental Results Framework for Monitoring and Reporting on the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Africa. We believe that that Continental Results Framework could be one of the areas for further cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union aimed at further advancing the women and peace and security agenda in Africa.

Let me conclude by emphasizing the need to continue building partnerships with various stakeholders, including regional and subregional organizations, concerned States, developmental agencies, civil society organizations, women experts and groups and peace and security partners within the women and peace and security agenda. Ethiopia remains firmly committed to supporting such efforts and to working with all of those present in advancing the cause of women.

Mrs. Cordova Soría (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Swedish presidency for organizing this timely meeting on peace and security in Africa with a focus on the women and peace and security agenda. We also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, and the African Union Special Envoy, Bineta Diop, for their briefings and their commitment drawing attention to this issue.

Bolivia reiterates the vital importance of promoting United Nations cooperation with regional and subregional organizations for the implementation and follow-up of the agenda on women and peace and security. In that understanding, we commend the high-level mission led by the Deputy Secretary-General, together with the African Union, to the Sahel region, the Lake Chad basin and South Sudan. We encourage the continuation of such practices, as they enhance the importance of women's participation in peace, security and development processes and in the fight against sexual violence in conflict.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), 18 years ago, the Security Council has recognized the fundamental link between respect for gender equality and international peace and security. Since then, the United Nations has led great efforts and made significant progress in implementing Security Council resolutions to effectively integrate the gender perspective into peace processes and to ensure the participation of women in them. However, despite those efforts, the implementation of the agenda on women and peace and security continues to face challenges that require the joint work of States, regional organizations, United Nations agencies and the international community as a whole.

With regard to the Sahel, the consequences of interventionism and regime-change policies in Libya in 2011 had the direct effect of destabilizing the region, causing deplorable results still present today, such as the growing instability and insecurity due to the presence of terrorist groups and violent armed groups and transnational crime that affects the entire population, but especially women and girls, who are victims of sexual violence. We must remember that terrorist groups use sexual violence not only as a weapon of war but also as a source of funding and a means of recruitment.

We recognize the increase in the participation of women in the security sector and national counter-terrorism bodies. However, the consolidation of a comprehensive and gender-sensitive approach involving each and every one of the stakeholders is still a long way off. We consider it vital to promote the implementation of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel 2018-2022 and the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and their priorities, which include gender equality and the empowerment of women to improve security, governance and resilience in the Sahel.

Moreover, in the Lake Chad basin, the practices of Boko Haram and Da'esh, such as kidnappings, forced marriages, rape, prostitution and the use of girls as human bombs, cannot continue and must not go unpunished. As resolution 2349 (2017) indicates, a holistic approach is needed to combat those terrorist groups. We welcome the efforts of the Joint Multinational Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram, and especially the efforts of the countries in the region in creating national action plans on women and peace and security. It is necessary to support that type of initiative, encourage cooperation among the countries that make up the special force and avoid interference in internal affairs that could destabilize the region.

We must also express our concern about reports of the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war by armed forces or groups in South Sudan. We believe that to make the needs of women and girls visible, their participation in the peace process is vital. The role of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) as mediator during the Revitalization Forum helps to ensure an inclusive process that enables women's participation through civil society organizations. We commend IGAD's efforts and call on the Council to continue to support the ongoing dialogue process.

In the same vein, we must intensify our efforts to ensure that women have a relevant place in the prevention, negotiation, mediation and peacebuilding processes. The creation of societies that promote gender equity makes peace processes inclusive and leads to sustainable peace. As long as women are not primary actors in the decision-making processes of conflict resolution, we will not achieve real peace.

We must fight impunity. Sexual violence in conflict is a war crime, and we must use the mechanisms available to us to bring the perpetrators to justice. We must support national authorities in the fight against sexual violence, in developing capacities for the prosecution of perpetrators and in ensuring access to basic services such as health and education. We must foster economic empowerment, which is necessary in post-conflict reconstruction. Promoting women's economic independence would make it possible to eliminate existing inequalities and would make sustainable development possible.

Finally, it is clear that the Organization has an important system in place to meet the global goals for gender equality and for the implementation of the agenda

on women and peace and security. We must continue to promote the resolutions adopted by the Council on this subject with the cooperation of the offices at our disposal. In that understanding, we commend the work of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Team of Experts on the Rule of Law and Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security and, of course, UN-Women, which do a great job in promoting the role of women in the quest for peace.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank you, Madam President, for organizing this public meeting of the Security Council on the issue of women and peace and security in the Sahel, which is a true priority for us. Your presence, Madam Minister, attests to that. It is both a privilege and a pleasure to see you here among us once again to preside over this important meeting. I would also like to warmly thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, and the African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Bineta Diop, for their enlightening briefings. The presence of the Deputy Secretary-General, following an important mission, shows the special importance of today's meeting.

In view of the commitment of the French and German authorities to promoting peace, security and development in the Sahel and to strengthening the women and peace and security agenda, I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of France and Germany. I would like to welcome my colleague and friend Christoph Heusgen, who is with us here today.

We welcome the recent joint visit by the Deputy Secretary-General and the Special Envoy of the African Union with which you, Madam President, are associated. That visit is a concrete example of the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, which enables us today to address the situation of women in the Sahel region in a timely manner. We also welcome the presence in the delegation of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Pramila Patten, and several United Nations representatives for gender equality. In that context, we wish to convey three main messages.

Our first message is based on our belief that only action that combines politics, security, development and women's rights can promote lasting stabilization in the Sahel. That is the shared compass that guides the efforts of France and Germany, which are firmly committed to peace and security in the Sahel.

France is first of all politically active through the role it plays in international mediation in support of the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. France also plays a role in security through the deployment of Operation Barkhane and the support given to the Joint Force of the Group of Five (G-5) for the Sahel, which includes the recent appointment of a gender expert in the G-5 Sahel secretariat in Nouakchott. That appointment will be decisive in strengthening the protection of women by the G-5 Sahel Joint Force. Germany is also firmly committed to Mali and the Sahel, namely, through its important contribution to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and its development and humanitarian assistance.

That commitment to peace and security in the Sahel is essential to effectively combating the violence to which women are too often exposed in the region. As noted by United Nations actors on the ground in Mali, women are increasingly targeted by groups committing terrorist acts and promoting violent extremism. In the Lake Chad basin region, particularly in Chad and the Niger, we also see that Boko Haram still poses a serious threat to people, especially women and girls. Finally, we strongly condemn the systematic use of sexual violence as a weapon of war in South Sudan, which is absolutely unacceptable. In that regard, we thank Special Representative Pramila Patten for all her efforts to improve the situation. The commitments made in the communiqués must be implemented and those efforts should make it possible to effectively combat impunity, including within the armed forces and police; to set up units trained to protect women; and to enable those who survive such abuses to bear witness in order to better counter the stigmatization of the victims of sexual violence.

Our second message concerns the fact that our shared mission is to act together to achieve sustainable development in the Sahel and among its most vulnerable populations, especially women, which of course includes the fight against climate change. The Alliance for the Sahel, which France and Germany launched nearly one year ago, on 13 July 2017, in partnership with the main donors and countries in the region, aims to promote faster, more coordinated and better targeted assistance for all disadvantaged groups, especially

women. The Alliance is part of the broader framework established by the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel to coordinate efforts for the development of the Sahel. I would like to take advantage of the presence of the Deputy Secretary-General to stress how much we support and appreciate her work to promote the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel. That common framework must guide all our efforts aimed at generating coordinated and effective action that will produce tangible results for the Sahelian people, in particular women.

Our third message deals more specifically with women's participation in regional peace processes. While progress has been made in that regard, women's participation in peace processes remains insufficient. We must be clear-headed enough to acknowledge that and courageous enough to rectify the situation. In Mali, for example, we believe that a lasting settlement of the crisis depends on the involvement of all parts of Malian society, in particular women, who must be involved not only in Government, but also in Parliament and at the local level. That is why France and Germany stress the importance of the participation of Malian women's organizations in the implementation of the peace agreement. That request was also made by the Security Council in its resolution 2423 (2018), which was adopted at the end of June.

In conclusion, I recall that France and Germany call for the systematic and long-term promotion of the capacity of women, especially in Africa, to be involved in peace processes and, more broadly, political processes. Let me be clear — that objective is not just one element among others or talking points, but rather a fundamental priority that is hard-wired in our hard drive in order to achieve parity and effectiveness. For that reason, our two countries support the initiative undertaken by the African Union to establish an African Women Leaders Network, and we encourage all Member States to join that initiative by, for example, joining the Group of Friends of the African Women Leaders Network, of which Ghana and Germany are co-Chairs. In the same vein, we commend the commitment of the International Organization of the Francophonie and its efforts to support francophone women's initiatives.

Mr. Djédjé (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Madam Minister, for your presence among us today and for presiding over this Council meeting in such a brilliant way. My delegation congratulates Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and Ms. Bineta Diop, Special Envoy of the African Union for Women, Peace and Security, for the quality of their briefings, which have enlightened us about women, peace and security issues in Africa, in particular in the Lake Chad basin and Sahel regions.

We welcome the tripartite United Nations-African Union-Sweden mission led by the Deputy Secretary-General to the Sudan, Chad and the Niger to assess the role of women in political decision-making and peace processes with a view to promoting their full participation in development efforts. That joint visit, which is in line with the visit organized one year ago to Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, illustrates the validity of the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in the area of peace and security. Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced of the need to work collectively to strengthen that partnership, and welcomes the joint mission, the lessons of which will enable the Security Council and the United Nations to strengthen strategies and mechanisms to maximize the benefits of women's participation in peace, security and sustainable development processes.

Since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), significant progress has been made in strengthening the role of women in conflict prevention and resolution. However, we must recognize that many obstacles continue to hinder the full participation of women in peace and post-crisis processes, especially in Africa. Indeed, new security challenges, such as the rise of terrorism, violent extremism, radicalization and climate change, are having a negative impact on women's ability to play their full role in peace and security. The complex and multidimensional crises facing the Sahel and Lake Chad basin regions are giving rise to the systematic use of sexual violence as a tactic of war, specifically by Boko Haram, and to criminal and terrorist activities in those regions. We deeply regret the fact that terrorist groups also use women as suicide bombers and human shields.

In response to that alarming situation, the Security Council adopted resolution 2349 (2017), which integrates the three dimensions of security and humanitarian and long-term development, thereby addressing the root causes of the crisis, which are poverty, underdevelopment, inequality and environmental degradation. Our Council also intends to contribute to the fight against the depletion of natural resources, the lack of employment and income, as well as issues of poor governance. My delegation also

welcomes the launch on 30 June by the United Nations of a support plan, entitled "Sahel: Land of opportunities", to promote sustainable peace and inclusive growth in the Sahel region, as well as to empower women and young people.

The stabilization of the countries of the region certainly requires the human, technical and financial support of the international community, but it also requires the full involvement of the populations concerned, in particular women, who should no longer be considered victims, but as full participants in the peace-building or post-conflict recovery processes. In that regard, it is worth recalling the relevance of resolution 1325 (2000) which, while underscoring the need for special measures to protect women against sexual and gender-based violence, highlights the importance of their participation at all stages of the peace-building process.

Like the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want identifies gender equality and the empowerment of women as priority objectives. The goals of the joint mission are therefore strengthened and call for, inter alia, a more inclusive approach to the role of women in peace processes. As stated in the framework document, the joint mission provides an opportunity to assess the progress and opportunities resulting from the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, which is based on the empowerment of women and youth, cross-border cooperation, conflict prevention and peacekeeping, inclusive economic growth, climate action and renewable energy. My country takes this opportunity to commend the leadership and work of the Deputy Secretary-General and supports her efforts to conduct a delicate mission in a context of instability and insecurity in the Sahel.

At the subregional level, the women and peace and security agenda receives special attention from the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), which works closely with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), in particular on promoting the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions. In that regard, we welcome the high-level conference on the theme "Women, violence and terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel: Building a regional and international response", which was held in Dakar on 10 and 11 April. The conference was organized by UNOWAS, in partnership with ECOWAS, the Group of Five for the Sahel, the Mano River Union and relevant United Nations agencies. It provided an opportunity for participants to recall the importance of building the resilience of communities, and in particular of women, against the spread of ideologies and networks that promote violent extremism and terrorism.

Coordinating efforts between the United Nations and the African Union, through the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, as well as the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, is crucial in addressing the challenges of the Sahel and Lake Chad basin region. In that regard, it is important for the countries of the region and the international community to ensure the protection of women, who are most often the primary victims of conflicts. They must therefore ensure that women participate in all peacebuilding efforts, given that it is now unanimously recognized that women's participation in peace processes ensures the sustainability and inclusiveness of those processes.

My country takes this opportunity to welcome the establishment in June 2017 of the African Women Leaders Network. The Network's call for action seeks to ensure that women help stabilize the continent with a view to achieving Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. To that end, it should be recalled that Côte d'Ivoire, which has always made the role and future of women a priority, was the second country in Africa to launch on 26 January, through its Ministry of Women, Child Protection and Solidarity, the African Women Leaders Network in Cote d'Ivoire.

The role of women in peace processes must be encouraged and supported, in particular when women are from crisis-affected or developing countries. To support countries, the international community must continue to ensure that women are increasingly involved in conflict prevention. It must also support women's leadership in the peace, security and development nexus.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to commend you, Madam President, for participating in today's important meeting. We also welcome Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and the African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Bineta Diop, and thank them for their very valuable briefings.

We have heard briefings today on the joint visit conducted by the United Nations and the African Union to the Sahel, in particular the south of the

region — Chad and the Niger – in which you, Madam President, participated. We welcome this initiative.

Undoubtedly, the Sahel region faces various challenges, which pose a threat to peace and security, including environmental issues that lead to tensions and food insecurity, in addition to economic problems, such as unemployment and other terrorism-related challenges. Such challenges all have an adverse impact on the people in that region. However, women and girls are particularly vulnerable to them.

We commend the efforts of the United Nations to promote the role of women in achieving peace and security in the Sahel, which is one of the priorities of the Secretary-General as he seeks to achieve gender parity at the various United Nations bodies. We welcome the fact that women account for 22 per cent of the contingent of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. The participation of women should be further encouraged throughout peacekeeping missions at all levels — at the administrative level, as members of peacekeeping forces and at the leadership level.

The State of Kuwait condemns in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks targeting the Sahel, which seek to undermine the stability and security of its peoples. We condemn in particular the terrorist activities of Boko Haram and the terrorist group Da'esh and its terrorist cells, which still exist even after its defeat. We support the efforts of the national Governments as they seek to withstand economic challenges, as stipulated in resolution 2349 (2017). Women and girls are the group most targeted by these terrorist operations because they are vulnerable to terrorist acts. African women and their children are often recruited by those terrorist and extremist groups. That is why we must promote the role of women in the fight against extremism and terrorism at all social levels, in particular at the regional and international levels.

We recall resolution 2242 (2015), which calls for the integration of the women and peace and security agenda while boosting the role of women to counter trafficking of light weapons. We reiterate our support for the countries of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel so that they can meet their national needs and address the common challenges faced in the Sahel region. We commend the participation of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel in supporting and developing national plans related to the issues of women and peace and security.

We recall that the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel has the empowerment of women as one of its six prioritie, and seeks to promote the role of women in achieving peace in the Sahel region. This can be done through the effective participation of women in the elections and other political processes, as well as the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. Strategies for fighting terrorism and violent extremism should be developed and implemented in line the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolutions 1325 (2000), 1889 (2009) and 2242 (2015), along with relevant international, regional and national mechanisms and action plans.

We commend the efforts and endeavours to deal with issues of peace and security in the continent. African solutions should be related to African problems while maintaining their national ownership. We stress that the countries of the African continent must be conflict-free. The African Union and its competent organs, such as its Peace and Security Council, are models for other regional organizations responsible for maintaining peace and security in the States of the continent. They work for the development and prosperity of the societies in the member states of the African Union. We note the important role played by the African Union in steering certain peace operations that have become very important means to address the African conflicts and crises. We believe that there is an opportunity to strengthen the role of African women and their contribution to achieving sustainable peace in accordance with the regional action plan to implement resolution 1325 (2000).

It is appropriate here to mention resolution 2320 (2016), which underscored that partnership between the United Nations and the African Union Peace and Security Council should be based on bilateral consultations and joint strategies as needed. They must come together through a process of consultation to take joint decisions, with burden-sharing, joint analysis, transparency and accountability, in order to address the common security challenges in Africa.

We reiterate the importance of following up on the implementation of the Security Council resolutions and statements, particularly those linked to Africa, cooperation with the African Union and ways to ensure effective partnership.

It is evident that we have a good normative framework for involving women in achieving peace and security around the world, particularly in Africa and the Sahel. We call for intensive efforts to implement the relevant United Nations and African Union resolutions and mechanisms, and for the involvement of women and youth with all other segments of the society to achieve peace and security.

To conclude, the State of Kuwait wishes to reiterate its support for cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union as they seek jointly to achieve peace, security and stability in the African continent, and to promote peace and security throughout the world.

Mr. Radomski (Poland): I thank you, Madam President, for convening and presiding over this meeting today. We are deeply honoured by your presence among us.

Let me also join all other members of the Council in expressing my thanks to Deputy-Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and the African Union Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security, Ms. Bineta Diop, for their comprehensive briefings.

Poland is concerned by the extent to which women, men, girls and boys are impacted by the interrelated challenges in the Sahel region. Among the factors causing unrest and insurgencies in the region are increased tensions between farmers, food insecurity, unemployment and, of course, terrorism. These important issues have dramatic consequences, affecting women and girls with particular intensity and further complicating the regional security situation. Not only are women and girls the victims of terrorist attacks, but they are also being radicalized by terrorists. As we have heard, almost two-thirds of the suicide bombings by Boko Haram in 2017 were carried out by women and girls. Their desperation demonstrates how crucial it is to continue efforts to provide peace and security for women in the Sahel region. Like all other members of the Council, we are also appalled by the large scale of sexual violence in the region.

Reflecting on the key challenges to ensuring women's security and prospects to participate in sustainable development processes, I want to stress the need for the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and its recent recalibration in order to ensure that it is responsive to the countries of the region and to mobilize greater resources for the region.

Resolution 2349 (2017), of March 2017, adopted following the Council's visit to the Lake Chad basin, is an important step in favour of women's peace and security in the region. Also, the call to action adopted at the high-level conference on women, violence and terrorism in West Africa and the Sahel, organized in April in Dakar, constitutes a step in right direction. We should be building on it further.

We also strongly believe that the Security Council and the United Nations as a whole have to promote women's positive role as agents for change in transitions from stabilization to long-term peacebuilding and development. With this in mind, over the past 18 years the Security Council, through its numerous resolutions, has created a solid normative framework, and good progress has been made in terms of implementation. What is needed now is more strategic and consistent implementation, followed by regular evaluations. Meetings like this one help to identify gaps between the framework and the situation on the ground.

We fully support initiatives to increase women's participation in democratic elections, decision-making and peace and development processes. We consider it essential to include gender considerations and the meaningful participation of women in early warning, mediation and conflict resolution efforts. Equally important is the mainstreaming of gender-specific language and the human rights of women in peace agreements. A greater role for women also needs to be ensured in post-conflict peacebuilding and economic recovery.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that further cooperation with the African Union and civil society is vital to increasing women's participation in peace, security and sustainable development processes in the region of Sahel and the Lake Chad basin.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Chad.

Mr. Moustapha (Chad) (*spoke in French*): His Excellency Ambassador Cherif Mahamat Zene, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chad should have liked to take part personally in this important high-level meeting but could not make the trip for reasons of timing. He has instructed me to deliver, on behalf of Chad, the following statement to the Council:

> "I would first like to congratulate Sweden on its accession to the presidency of the Council for

the month of July, and to thank it for organizing this important open debate on a very important topic. I warmly note the moving testimony offered by Ms. Wallström on the situation of women in the Lake Chad region.

"I also thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her briefing and for the riveting scenario she painted of the current challenges facing Chad. I further offer our thanks to Ms. Bineta Diop, African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, and commend her commitment to helping Chad to implement its action plan arising from resolution 1325 (2000).

"Chad was one of the destinations of a joint United Nations-African Union-Sweden mission during the Swedish presidency of the Security Council, which was led by Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed. I should like to thank Ms. Mohammed, and through her the entire delegation and the United Nations, for having visited my country, including the city of Bol, the place in the Lake Chad region most afflicted by the barbaric terrorist attacks of Boko Haram. The field visit to the region, where refugees and internally displaced persons are concentrated, mostly women and children, allowed the mission to see at first hand the tragic consequences of the combined effects of terrorist attacks and climate change on vulnerable victims of those two phenomena.

"The situation in the region reflects the precariousness of people's living conditions, especially women, exposed to the adverse consequences of climate change on development and to the effects of the conflict afflicting the neighbourhood. The crises and conflicts in Chad's vicinity have also given rise to a wave of refugees and internally displaced persons, most of whom are women and children, whose numbers are estimated to exceed 700,000 people on Chad's territory. Those refugees and displaced persons share with their hosts the scarce resources on which they depend upon for their daily survival. At the same time, that situation puts pressure on the economic and environmental conditions in the region.

"Given that very complex and fragile context, courageous, determined and resilient women are daily heroically facing every obstacle to ensure the survival of their families. Given the role and the status of women in the process of development and crisis management, the Government of Chad has undertaken major reforms to address the situation of women so as to eliminate all the existing inequalities, discrimination and gender-based violence by 2030. The momentum generated by that Government reform dovetails with the goals set out by resolution 1325 (2000) and provides a sound foundation for the drafting under way of a plan of action for the resolution's full implementation. We look forward with anticipation to the contribution of UN-Women in that regard.

"Along the same lines, in addition to the specific measures undertaken with regard to women, which include providing microcredit to pron .e revenue-generating activity, thereby impro ng women's living standards, the Government is especially focusing on girls' education and adult literacy, without which an awareness of those reforms as well as their impact will be limited.

"Moreover, by way of a law adopted on 22 May, the Government of Chad has established phased parity between men and women when it comes to both elected and appointed office, with the immediate implementation of a 30 per cent quota for women. Likewise, a law adopted in 2015 prohibits girls being married before the age of 18, while a prison sentence of five to 10 years has been added to the criminal code for any individual who in any way forces a minor into marriage. Religious and civil society leaders made their contributions on that issue and were made aware of the importance of their participation in the fight against early marriage.

"The gender issue is a key facet and a priority for our Government in crafting and implementing development policies. The joint efforts to that end by national authorities and United Nations agencies play an important part. However, the road ahead is long and strewn with obstacles. The economic difficulties faced by Chad constrain the Government's ability to act, which has already been significantly limited by our military commitments in combating terrorism in the Lake Chad basin and Sahel. Given the mounting terrorist threat, Chad unfortunately finds itself forced to allocate its scarce resources to the security of the country and the subregion, to the detriment of economic and social development — for there can be no

peace or stability, and much less development, without security.

"We therefore launch an appeal to all our development partners, including the United Nations, for a shift in approach to partnership to transition from conventional humanitarian assistance to pooled efforts focused on sustainable development and resilience. In that regard, we commend the envisaged recalibration of the United Nations Comprehensive Strategy for the Sahel through the Sahel support plan. We underscore the need for robust involvement in the review process by the countries concerned, including taking their priorities into account. Following decades of humanitarian and development assistance, we regret that the impact of the results on the target populations fall woefully short of expectations. On its path towards social and economic development — a guarantor for peace, stability and security — is drawing the lessons of its past experience to henceforth measure the efforts of its development partners against concrete results that can be measured in terms of improvement in people's living conditions.

"In conclusion, I hope that the Deputy Secretary-General's vision — in which, again, you participated, Madam President — will open a new chapter in our partnership so that Chad can be supported in its efforts aimed at promoting sustainable development by improving the status of women in line with our national development plan, which was the subject of a round table organized last September in Paris. Honouring the pledges made by all our partners at that meeting — and we would like to thank them here — is essential for Chad and for the empowerment of women and girls."

The President: I now give the floor to Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed to respond to the comments made.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I thank speakers for their incredibly supportive response to the opportunity that we have had to share about our visit — but, more important, about the big issues.

The representative of Chad referred to the importance of the recalibrated United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel, which cannot be underscored enough. While we await the African Union's review of the Strategy, one thing we have learned is the need to be better coordinated and coherent and really work towards a joined-up response in terms of investments.

We also thank the representative of France because, along with France, Germany and the European Union, the Alliance for the Sahel has also been incredibly important in bringing this all together. I think that many of the Heads of State in the region emphasize the need for coordination and living up to the commitments that were made five or six years ago, which have yet to realize any benefits. Had we done so, we probably would not be in the position that we are in now. The urgency of getting behind one strategy is really important. We are grateful that that is an outcome of the Security Council.

I must say that the real concern for me is that that urgency must come when countries are grappling with a fragile State and everything that comes with it — the expectations of people and trying to maintain a democracy, which is not just about elections. It is about the three arms of Government, which need to be supported equally, and that gap is closing as countries inch towards becoming failed States. That is a very real concern. We saw that on the ground. We saw the concerns of Heads of State there.

It was reflected in many instances. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden said, we should not have been going to fistula clinics and seeing them full of young girls. We should have been going to classrooms. Instead, here we were in Niamey, with three centres. We only saw one, and they had huge demands to expand. We were really looking to say that we should be looking at prevention, and prevention meant getting girls into school and investments in development. I suppose that the eight-point plan for the Republic of the Niger did have money for education, but there is just no fiscal space for it because funding is being taken up by the responsibilities to care for migrants coming back across the borders from Lybia, as well as by security issues related to handling Boko Haram.

I think the other concern is that Boko Haram is becoming much more organized. In its own way, it is providing an alternative to what Governments cannot provide for their peoples. There is an urgent need to stop that trend. It was not just the suicide bombers that we saw, who obviously in some cases were either hypnotized or forced into it, but there are many willing girls who are now following and communities that are sympathizing with many of these terrorist groups.

That, I think, is far more dangerous and we need to turn it back.

We also saw the challenge of the conflicts between farmers and herders across the region. Again, I would emphasize that population growth and other dynamics, such as urbanization, and the stress they put on food security are something we have not really looked at. We have gone to the symptoms and looked at them from the political, ethnic or religious point of view. It is much more than that, and I think that we need a better, joined-up response to how we articulate the Sustainable Development Goal on cities, for instance. This happens in context and has repercussions on insecurity.

I would say that we did see a really wonderful opportunity of getting behind a cross-border initiative of the Lake Chad Basin Commission to draft its plan, which really answered a number of the issues we had and took care of the context of climate and conflict. But it needs to be urgently supported. There are frameworks and vehicles, checks and balances that we can put in there with respect to the areas that we really worry about or the risks that we think we can mitigate through a better joined-up partnership of multilateral system. But it needs to happen now.

I think that reforms in the development system really do help in bringing about good coordination. We saw excellent coordination in the humanitarian and development nexus in Chad and in South Sudan, where of course the tensions probably helped us to come together. We also saw it in the Niger, when they got together with the ruling rural integrated programmes.

I would point to the African Union-United Nations framework for peace, security and development. The Secretary-General was there yesterday. They launched the action plan for development, which includes the Sahel Strategy. We believe that that represented a solid step forward. Again, we would plead for support for that and for the African Women Leaders Network. That is a strong group. They will manage to put together and launch the fund for women. It takes a different angle. This time they are looking at building the capacities of women fund managers, which means they are looking to leverage resources that are available in the private sector and elsewhere. It is not just a case of grants; it is a case of how we leverage more funding for that. The work continues.

The President: I give the floor to Ms. Diop to respond to the comments made.

Ms. Diop: I would like to thank the members of the Security Council for giving us this opportunity to brief them. My special thanks go to you, Madam President, and to the Deputy Secretary-General for your generosity in staying so long in the region and listening to African women. We are very happy that you could come back and report to the Security Council. I am very glad to see the entire Security Council fully support the agenda and our mission, and we hope that we will implement whatever is decided here.

I need to echo again the concern of the women of South Sudan. South Sudan needs to get back to where it was before when there was peace and security. Women are asking that we restore their dignity. They want to go back to the peace process. They want to be part of the governance mechanism to be put in place. They want to be part of the future elections and the process of fighting against impunity. We have heard them.

My Office has supported many countries in Africa. So far, we have 22 national action plans. I want to do more, with the support of everybody, to make sure that by 2020 almost half of the countries of Africa have a national action plan. But national action plans are not just the end of it. That is why my Office has also developed a continental results-based framework to measure progress in implementation. We need to go beyond resolutions and frameworks to measuring progress with indicators and targets. The African Union Chairperson will, through my Office, deliver an annual report that can be shared with the Security Council. I hope that, with this, we can measure the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda and the development of the continent of Africa.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of of speakers.

I would mention one more thing that we forgot to to tell the Security Council. The cooperation among the European Union, the African Union and the United Nations in a project like the Spotlight project in the Niger to prevent sexual violence against girls and women is, I think, a good example of how we have to continue to take this forward.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.